

Podiatry

Achilles Tendonitis

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At the Redcliffe Heel Pain Clinic, we often get people presenting with pain and stiffness just above their heel. This is often worse in the morning after getting out of bed or several hours following increased activity or sport.

Achilles tendonitis

Heel pain can be caused by injury or overuse. Pain in your heel, which is the largest bone in your foot, can impact your ability to work and carry out your normal daily activities.



Causes

A violent strain can cause trauma to the calf muscles or the Achilles tendon. This injury can happen during a strong contraction of the muscle, as when running or sprinting. Landing on the ground after a jump can force the foot upward, also causing injury. The strain can affect different portions of the calf muscles or Achilles tendon. For instance, the strain may occur in the center of the muscle, or it may happen where the muscles join the Achilles tendon (called the musculotendinous junction).

An increase in activity or the commencement of a new activity which the body is not used to can also cause the inflammation. Sometimes even the use of new footwear leads to added strain on the tendon leading to inflammation.

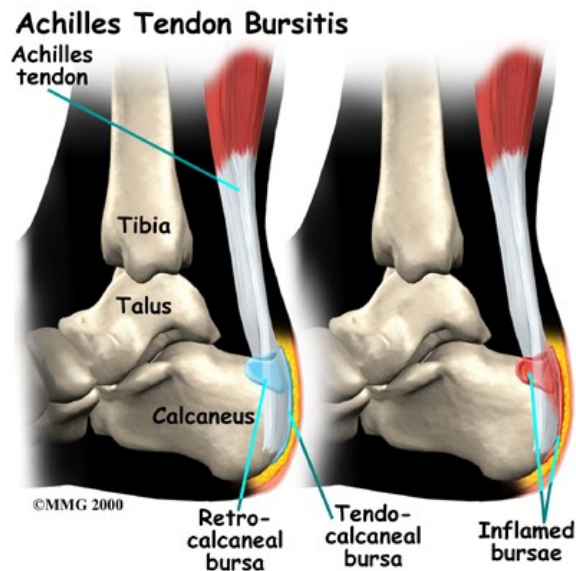
Other common injuries of the achilles tendon

Tendonosis or tendinopathy

Chronic overuse or long-term inflammation may contribute to changes in the Achilles tendon, leading to degeneration and thickening of the tendon. As mentioned above, studies show that although inflammation may have contributed to the initial changes in the tendon, there is no acute sign of inflammation in chronically painful tendons. Most experts now refer to this chronic condition as tendonosis or tendinopathy instead of the acute diagnosis of paratendonitis or tendonitis.

Calcaneal Bursitis

A bursa is a fluid-filled sac designed to limit friction between rubbing body parts. These sacs, or bursae, are found in many places in the body. When a bursa becomes inflamed, the condition is called bursitis. Calcaneal bursitis is an inflammation in the bursa behind the heel bone. This bursa normally limits friction when the thick fibrous Achilles tendon that runs down the back of the calf glides up and down behind the heel. With increased or repetitive activity that causes increased friction, bursitis in this area can develop.



Treatment

At the Redcliffe Heel Pain Clinic we have a 3 step process to treat the underlying cause of Achilles Tendonitis:

1. Assess and treat the inflammation
2. Intensive period of focused ligament and muscle therapy
 - ◆ This may involve: Massage, dry needling, stretching, strengthening, strapping, introduction of a heel raise (where required) to take the tension off painful tendon
3. Improving the flexibility, strength, and alignment around the ankle joint and entire lower extremity. An Exercise Physiologist will take you through a program in our purpose-built strength and conditioning centre to address the underlying cause of your condition and ensure it doesn't come

back again. This is especially helpful when getting our clients back to their sport or work.